

Solano County Sheriff/Coroner's Office
Facilities Inspection and Tour
2004-2005 Grand Jury Report

I. Reason for Investigation

The California Penal Code §919(b) mandates that the Grand Jury inquire into the conduct and management of public prisons within the County.

II. Procedure

The Grand Jury:

- Was introduced to the Solano County Sheriff and his senior staff. A Powerpoint overview of the department's operation and the Vallejo Jail was provided
- Toured and inspected the Fairfield and Claybank detention facilities
- Interviewed staff at the Fairfield and Claybank facilities
- Inspected on-site health facilities and food preparation (Claybank)
- Toured the Coroner's Office
- Toured and inspected a holding cell for the Solano County Superior Court (Fairfield)
- Discussed the Kitchell/DSA/KMD Inmate Population Projection Study
- Evaluated the Electronic Monitoring Program

III. Background

The Solano County Jails (Fairfield and Claybank facilities), Superior Court holding cells (Fairfield), Sheriff's office holding facility in Vallejo and the Coroner's Office are under the oversight of the Solano County Sheriff. A Powerpoint presentation was provided on the Vallejo facility. The rest of the listed facilities were inspected and found to be clean.

A study by Kitchell/DSA/KMD, commissioned by Solano County, indicates that the total number of required beds for the inmates in Solano County is projected to be 2,054 by the year 2015. This compares to the 1,116 beds that are currently available.

The California State Board of Corrections originally approved the Fairfield facility for 740 beds. The facility still has 740 beds. However, based on the facility's current square footage, the Board of Corrections will allow only 705 beds to be filled.

The Electronic Monitoring Program was discussed and found to be an asset to the overall operation and to the inmates. The Sheriff's Department has taken over operation of the home detention program, replacing a private company. This program allows work furlough inmates to be away from home for a maximum of 12 hours per day. The equipment is leased at \$14 per day, per inmate, while they are in custody. Currently, there are 64 inmates in the program. The Sheriff's Department took over this program on May 1, 2004. Since that time, this program has saved the Sheriff's Department approximately \$1 million in prisoner housing costs.

Due to projected inmate population growth and the projected expansion of the Claybank facilities, a recruitment plan to insure proper staffing has been initiated. There were 17,939 bookings in 2003 and 91% of those were for felony crimes. The average stay for an inmate is 21 days. However,

there are a few unsentenced inmates who have been in county jail from five to seven years creating a burden on the Criminal Justice System. Since the 2003-2004 Grand Jury inspection, some female inmates have been moved to the West Wing of the Claybank facility.

IV. Findings and Recommendations

Finding # 1: The projected inmate population growth rate in Solano County is substantial. This will have a negative impact upon staff and inmate safety.

Recommendation #1: The Sheriff's staff recruitment plan should be supported and appropriately funded by the Board of Supervisors.

Finding #2: The Electronic Monitoring Program is an asset to the organization and to the inmates.

Recommendation #2: The Electronic Monitoring Program should continue to serve as a viable alternative to the standard custody situation.

Finding #3: A small number of inmates have been in jail for years without going to trial. This creates an administrative burden on the Sheriff's Department.

Recommendation #3: None.

V. Comments

The Solano County Sheriff's Department is a well run organization. The facilities that were inspected were clean. The staff appeared to be well organized and supportive of the organization's overall mission.

The Criminal Justice system should look at ways to move career criminals through the system faster.

VI. Affected Agencies

- Solano County Sheriff Department/Coroner's Office
- Solano County Board of Supervisors